

## SCOTT COUNTY KICKER

Published at Benton, Mo., every SATURDAY BY PHIL A. HAVNER.

Subscription, \$1.00 Per Year.

### ANNOUNCEMENT CARDS.

25 cents for first ten words and 1c for each additional word per week.

I hereby announce my candidacy for Collector of Scott county subject to the Democratic primary, C. C. STEVENSON.

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## DRUNKENNESS A DISEASE.

That the habitual drinking of alcoholic liquors is a disease, just the same as any ailment, is no longer questioned by the medical profession. In some cases it is hereditary, while in others it is acquired. In either case it is a disease.

And even state authorities are beginning to recognize that there is a difference between a drunkard and a criminal. The New York State Commission of Prisons, in its annual report, says that nearly one-third of the commitments to jail in that state during the past year were for the offense of intoxication, and concludes:

"This offense should not be treated strictly as a crime. Drunkenness has in it an element of malice—one of the usual and necessary elements of crime. Habitual drunkenness arises largely from mental weakness, and its treatment should partake of the characteristics which the state has deemed wise to use in other cases of mental aberration. There is a large distinction between the man who cannot control his appetite for drink and the man who wilfully and maliciously commits an offense against the person or property of another. The law should recognize this distinction. The present practice of sending him to jail or to a penitentiary, branded as a criminal, to consort with thieves, only depraves and discourages him, and at the same time inflicts punishment and privation upon his family. Some wiser method of dealing with this offense should be ascertained and adopted."

If only the world could view the drunkard as the New York Prison Commissioners see him—a weak and diseased being, deserving of pity. The Chicago Examiner, like all other metropolitan newspapers that carry whole page advertisements for this or that liquor house, does not agree with the New York Commissioners, and says:

"No doubt in some cases drunkenness is a disease—in the case of the born dipsomaniac, that periodically yields to the impulse to cast aside all self-restraint, and also in the case of the man that has drunk steadily until his whole system is poisoned. Both need the doctor more than the policeman. \* \* \* The immense majority of drunkards are men that have simply acquired a habit that has strengthened into a vice. They have walked with open eyes into a trap already crowded with victims."

Yes, with "open eyes" we walk into the trap. But isn't it a little strange that the nation, the state and the municipality sell privileges to set the "trap already crowded with victims?" And more: The prison commission describes drunkenness as "mental weakness"—a disease of the mind. And what do we find? We find almost any magazine or newspaper and you find the purity and quality of this or that whiskey extolled in box-car letters. Look at a billboard, a barn or a fence and old booze stares you in the face and plays on that "mental weakness."

### LOCAL OPTION NOT YET.

The long-talked-of petition asking the county court to grant an election to submit the question of local option to the people was presented last Friday by E. Herbert Smith.

The necessary number of signers, in order to allow the court to grant such election, is ten per cent of the qualified voters voting at the last general election. Hence, in Scott county, the required number would be 104.

While, under ordinary circumstances, the people of this county would freely sign more than double the required amount, yet there was a strong suspicion that at least some of the present promoters were either ill advised or else not in good faith.

And there was ground for this. There was no organization, no funds and no plan of campaign. At the court house urging the submission of the question Friday there was no one from any part of the county.

Mr. Smith had a petition to which he had obtained some 300 names. Suspecting that, perhaps, he was only after the \$30 or \$40 of county money that it would cost to publish the notices of election and the result, I sent a bid to the county court offering to do the work for one-third the legal rate.

Soon after this it was decided that no election would be held. Many of the signers were found to be not eligible.

### THE MACHINE AT WORK.

Up in Reynolds county the Democratic central committee got together last week. Five townships were not represented at all, and two were represented by proxy. This committee called a mass meeting to be held at Centerville, the county seat, on March 7 to select delegates to the state convention.

What for? The date for the state convention had not yet been set. Why this rush?

But let us look at it from a machine point of view. At best the roads in Reynolds county are very bad. About the first of March they are at their worst. This will keep the farmers away—and the farmers are for Folk.

When a mass convention is held at a county seat town the chances are a hundred to one that the politicians

will run it. They have their plans laid, work harmoniously and generally under cover, while the farmers go to town divided and confused.

Up in Reynolds county the job holders will select themselves as delegates and permit themselves to go unopposed.

### THE STATE SENATORSHIP.

The State Senatorship in this district seems to be in a bad way. No good man for the place seems willing to offer, and the other kind are already had too long.

It is rumored that Senator Marshall will run again as a matter of "vindication." He got this idea, no doubt, from Charley Kreis, who, while in Mexico, said he was coming back to Missouri to run for governor and vindication.

Jim Conyan, another good Cleveland Democrat and anti-Folk shouter who has no use for the Kansas City platform, is "sagging" on entering the race.

Whether he will really be in the race or only a dummy to carry New Madrid county for Senator Marshall I do not know.

Four years ago the people of New Madrid county were said to be so bitter against Senator Marshall that the machine did not dare attempt to instruct the delegates. But "safe" men were selected—and the people were fooled.

It may be possible that the ringsters fear another job of this kind won't work, and will substitute the "safe man" racket.

Jim Conyan is a good, whole-souled fellow, a lawyer and a good mixer, but is not the man the KKKers would like to see go to the State Senate from this district. He is more of a politician than a statesman.

"Long" John Dolan, who has five years' sentence hanging over his head, has not resigned as chairman of the Democratic City Central Committee of St. Louis, although the committee held a meeting last week. If this thing keeps on, it will appear to us fellows out here in the woods that a penitentiary sentence is a necessary requirement to prove a man to be a member of the party in good standing.

The Democratic State Committee met in St. Louis and ordered the judicial convention to meet at St. Joseph on June 21; the nominating convention for national delegates at Joplin June 29, and the state nominating convention at Jefferson City July 19. Congressman Vandiver was present and tried to get a state primary to nominate candidates for state offices, but the machine didn't want any of that.

### Hoo-ray for the "party."

The Doctrine of Inherent Wickedness.

By JES. H. FAIRFIELD.

We hear a great deal nowadays about the inherent wickedness of mankind.

When we try to point out the defects of the present social system, the inequality of opportunity and the evils arising therefrom, we are told that men are naturally bad and that the degraded condition of the masses is entirely due to their own wickedness.

Change human nature, says the college-cramped orator, then conditions will change. Make the people good, then you can have good conditions.

This is about equivalent to saying that you must change the nature of wheat or corn in order to produce a better crop.

The wise farmer, however, does not attempt to change the nature of his crops. He simply brings the soil and general conditions into harmony with the natural qualities of the plant.

Once there was a man who discovered a rare and beautiful flower. So great was the power of its beauty that the man became intoxicated therewith, and he worshipped the plant with all the strength of his nature.

He took it from its natural bed and placed it in a box in his room so that he might worship at its shrine perpetually. He tended it with loving care; early and late he lavished on it all the kindness and attention known to the human heart.

But, alas! In spite of all the love and care bestowed on it, the flower drooped and faded. It became weak and emaciated. It was slowly dying. And when at length it was no longer beautiful the man became morose and sad. "Ah," said he, "the plant is bad. Its inherent nature is such that it cannot be made good. Its beauty is of the devil."

But the angel of God touched the eyes of the man and he saw with the eyes of truth and wisdom.

He saw that the earth wherein the flower was planted was without nourishing qualities; he saw that the air of the room wherein it grew was impure; he saw that the sun and dew of heaven never touched its petals, and he saw that the plant was dying as a result of these evil conditions. He saw all this and he said: "Lo, I am a fool!"

So he took the dying plant out to the garden where the earth was fresh and nourishing, where the air was pure and the sun shone in all his splendor. And behold the flower lived again. Joyfully it spread its blossoms to the sun and drank in the fresh dew of heaven. And it came to pass that in a little while there was not a more beautiful flower in all the land.

And the man smiled and was glad.

## And so it is with humanity.

It is all very well to talk of the inherent wickedness of the masses. It is easy for the shallow thinker and the mediocre orator to utter all interminable rhetoric about the depravity and perverseness of human nature. It sounds well when the dode college professor or the popular preacher exclaims, with a majestic sweep of the arm: "Men are wicked by nature. You must change that nature if you would change modern conditions."

Yes, it sounds well. And it is a very popular doctrine.

But it has one serious drawback, one fatal error in its composition: IT IS A LIE!

Men are made good or bad by their environment. The average tool is honest and industrious. By rigid economy he manages to live and bring up a family. He toils day in and day out from the cradle to the grave. He has no time for recreation or intellectual development. Perhaps he gets drunk and is branded as a felon. He dies and is buried. It is a question whether he has had one really enjoyable holiday in all his life.

Was he inherently wicked?

The miners of Pennsylvania and other states are, as a rule, honest, hard-working people. They must rent houses and buy supplies from their employers. To a certain extent they are slaves. These conditions are odious to self-respecting men, but when they sought to change them they were shot down like dogs.

Were they inherently wicked?

The young girl of the city finds employment in a sweat-shop. She toils from 10 to 15 hours daily. She is paid by the piece, and by taxing her strength to the limit she can earn, perhaps, \$3 or \$4 per week. By and by her health fails, and she finds it impossible to exist in this state of fever and famine. She goes on the streets.

Is she inherently wicked?

Oh, you voters—you men who have the playing in power of those who make the laws—and you legislators who never lift your voices in behalf of the oppressed, what will you when you stand before God charged with this most hideous of all crimes—the perpetual degradation of your brothers and sisters?

For by all the teachings of the moral law the greatest of crimes may be perpetrated by inaction.

### Mr. Folk's Work in St. Louis.

From the New York Independent.

Some members of the present Municipal Council of St. Louis do not appear to have been frightened by the attacks of Prosecuting Attorney Folk upon a score of their predecessors in office. A grand jury is now inquiring about new and recent instances of hoodluming in connection with franchise elections suggested by the approaching Exposition. Kirtz, one of the old members, who found the weight of an indictment so inconvenient that he betook himself to Mexico, forfeiting a bond of \$20,000, was brought back in custody, but was speedily at liberty again, having remarked to Mr. Folk that he could be elected Governor of Missouri if he dared to remain in town and become a candidate.

The grand jury's attention is reported to have been attracted by the fact that a hoodlum, already convicted and sentenced. The peculiar features of the situation direct attention to one aspect of the memorable prosecution of which the public has little or no knowledge. Mr. Folk and his grand and petty juries have labored earnestly and continuously for a long time. Many persons, State legislators as well as municipal councilmen and the purchasers of legislation, have been indicted. About a score of these have been convicted and sentenced. With in the last month it has repeatedly been asserted in the press that not one of these convicts has yet been imprisoned. This seems incredible, but we have seen no denial of it. Conviction in these cases does not seem to imply punishment. On appeal the views of the Supreme Court have been at variance with those of the petit juries and trial judges. In one case, a convicted man escaped in this way: the evidence that he had bribed or attempted to bribe a municipal officer was not overcome, but it was held that the officer in question was not the one who was authorized to award the contract for which the bribe was offered. There had been some doubt about the distribution of authority, but the job really belonged to another department. And so this victim of Mr. Folk's energy gained his liberty because the bribe had been given or offered to the wrong man. If indictment, prosecution, conviction and sentence are not to be followed by punishment, there is nothing surprising in the complacency of Kirtz or in fresh negotiations for the corrupt sale of franchises. As the matter stands now, a full record of the cases, including the action of the Supreme Court, would be an interesting and curious exhibit at the coming Exposition.

### NOTICE OF FINAL SETTLEMENT.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned, Theophile Schuler, administrator of the estate of MARY M. MEYER, deceased,

will make final settlement of his accounts with said estate as such administrator at the next term of the Probate Court of Scott county, Mo., to be held at Benton, in said county, on the 22nd day of February, A. D. 1904.

THEOPHILE SCHULER, Administrator.